DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 363 600 SP 034 823

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TITLE Anatomy of a National Team Case Competition: Reflections of the Winning Team.
PUB DATE Mar 93
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Atlanta, GA, April 12-16, 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Achievement; *Case Studies; *Competition; *Education Majors; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Preservice Teacher Education; Selection; Success; Teacher Education Programs; *Teaching Methods; *Teamwork
IDENTIFIERS *Case Method (Teaching Technique); *Hampton University VA

ABSTRACT

Hampton University (Virginia) developed a team for the Commonwealth Center Invitational Team Case Competition composed of four junior level students majoring in math education, history education, elementary education, and special education. One student was a white female, two were African American females, and one was an African American male, and all ranged in age from 20 to 22. The team developed a proposal which successfully resulted in its selection for the competition. The proposal described the university, the use of cases in the teacher education program, and why the team would be a good one to include. To train for the competition, the team became acquainted with case-based teaching and analyzed cases, with the faculty sponsor assuming the role of a provocateur and a judge. The team and faculty sponsor also collected information about the writings, professional affiliations, and philosophical positions on education of the individuals who would be serving as judges and provocateurs in the competition. Preparation for the competition is described from the perspective of one of the team members. The celebrity status enjoyed by the team after it won the competition is highlighted. A list of skills and knowledge needed by students to achieve success in such events is provided. (JDD)

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Anatomy of a National Team Case Competition

"Reflections of the Winning Team"

JoAnn W. Haysbert

Introduction

Hampton University established its teacher education program in the early 1930's. Since that time it has endeavored to remain in the forefront of the profession. To this end, for the past three years the Department of Education has been keenly interested in the inclusion of case based teaching in its teacher education program. To support this interest the departmental faculty development committee sponsored workshops: to acquaint faculty with this innovative concept as a medium for instruction; to solicit faculty interested in utilizing the concept in their courses; and to provide training in writing case studies. As a result of the aforestated effort, approximately 50% of the faculty currently include some aspect of case based teaching in their courses. In addition, the interest in case based teaching was hightened when the faculty sponsor read an article by Pat Hutchings describing the interest of the American Council on Education (ACE) in case based teaching. A few months later, the faculty sponsor read the announcement requesting applications for the Commonwealth Center Invitational Team Case Competition. She then approached Dr. Carlton Brown, Dean for the School of Liberal Arts &

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Education and requested his support and approval to formulate a team representing Hampton University. The team was formulated in December, 1991.

The Hampton University Team

The Hampton University team was selected with care and deliberation by the faculty sponsor and other department faculty. Two members of the team were former students in the foundations course taught by the faculty sponsor. These individuals were scholarly, energetic, articulate, committed, genuinely interested in the profession and competitive. These two students were pursuing a major in math education and history education, respectively. To insure diversity, Dr. Larnell Flannagan, Department Chair, was asked to recommend a student with like qualities pursuing a major in elementary education. The team was finally completed with the selection of a special education major. This student was recommended by Dr. Dawn Waegerle, Assistant Professor in Special Education.

The Hampton University team consisted of four junior level students, one white female, two African American females and one African American male, and ranged in age 20 to 22.

Efforts To Prepare A Proposal

Once the team was formulated, the task to prepare the proposal was undertaken. The proposal was subdivided into five areas. To promote clarity and to address the major areas of importance only three components of the original proposal will be described in this paper.

(1) In describing the university and its location, the faculty sponsor put forth a concerted effort to capture the essence of the institution, its mission, its legacy, and its student population as a family learning environment fondly referred to as "Our Home By The Sea."

(2) In describing the use of cases in our teacher education program, a two dimensional approach was delineated. First, the departmental faculty development committee sponsored workshops to acquaint faculty with this innovative concept as a medium of instruction, to solicit faculty interested in utilizing the concept in their courses, and to provide training in writing case studies.

Second, the faculty sponsor designed two of the clinical experiences (a local board of education meeting and a local parent teacher organization meeting) to reflect a modified case study. The students and the faculty sponsor worked collaboratively to assess the dynamics of the experience(s) as related to:

- identifying issues presented --- what is being taught

- o characterizing the role of primary participants --- to whom
- o summarizing points of importance to educators, parents and the community in general
- o conditions under which the experience takes place
- o assessing student experiences and learning

(3) In describing <u>why the team would be a good one to include in the competition,</u> the faculty sponsor offered the following supportive statements. Hampton University has earned its place in history as an institution with a standard of excellence. The legacy continues because our team:

- o ranks among the best
- o will use the experience as another opportunity to enhance their growth
- o loves competition
- o are student scholars

- o demonstrate unique student involvement in the teaching - learning process by helping to design curriculum in case based teaching

- o volunteered to participate in weekly dialogues and training sessions on case based teaching

- o represents diversity to include race, major field of study, legal residence, gender, family structure (dysfunctional families) and economic status

- o participates in co-curricular activities

- o demonstrates a commitment to the teaching profession

Efforts to Participate Once Team was Selected

Hampton University was notified of its selection to participate in the competition in late March. The winning spirit of the Hampton team is that all involved had decided to continue as a team even if they were not selected to participate in the Commonwealth Center Invitational Team Case Competition.

During the initial meeting the students were apprised of the selection procedures utilized to identify them as potential team members. Students were informed that their participation was voluntary as there would be no reward beyond the sheer joy of learning, competing, and winning! The four students selected as potential members quickly developed a bond and formulated the Hampton University team.

Beginning in January until early May, the team met on a weekly basis, at a mutually agreed upon time to train. Since the sessions typically cut across the lunch hour, it was common for the sessions to be characterized as the "brown bag gatherings."

The department of education faculty assisted the faculty sponsor in collecting all accessible information on CASE Studies in education. The first two or three meetings were devoted to acquainting the team with case based teaching. The meetings were informal but instructional. Students engaged in a "classroom-like" exchange of ideas and viewpoints on the information being presented. One case study was selected as a practice tool for learning. Each team member analyzed the case and shared their analysis during the weekly meeting. On specific occasions, the faculty sponsor assumed the role of a provocateur and a judge. In addition, the team constantly queried the faculty sponsor on issues of professional knowledge, ethics and legal responsibilities. The team became totally involved in this process.

The next phase involved what was called systems analysis - getting to know the competition, the judges and the provocateurs. The faculty sponsor set out to collect data on the writings, professional affiliations and philosophical positions on education for those serving as judges and provocateurs. Well-rounded, prepared and equipped with knowledge, skills, and information the team welcomed with great enthusiasm the team case competition. The Hampton team was driven by one goal-to bring nome the academic gold with a fine display of professional eloquence reflective of Hampton University's standard of excellence.

Let us now consider the team's reflections. Adhim DeVeaux, our team captain reflects candidly on: (A) preparation for the competition once selected, (B) personal problems within the team; and (C) the teams feelings during the competition.

> (A) When Dr. Haysbert first assembled the team and informed us of the competition, we all agreed case studies were interesting and decided to organize a team, even if we were not selected to compete. By the time we learned that Hampton University was chosen to compete, our team had been working with a sample case for weeks. Dr. Haysbert masterminded our preparations by providing the necessary confidence and strategy to strengthen our teams already high morale. Each member of the team studied and analyzed every aspect of the sample case. This helped our team focus on specific components and become knowledgeable.

(B) In my view, Hampton without a doubt, picked the best team the University had to offer! Each member of our team is free spirited and friendly, so we all got along fine. But we are all human so there were some personal conflicts among the team members. These conflicts surfaced especially during the competition, when tensions were high. What pulled us through was our competitive nature, loyalty to Hampton University and mutual respect for the team. If there was anyone with conflict within the team it was I. Being captain of a team which was 75% female, called for special handling in itself. More than once I had to seperate myself from the team, to collect my thoughts. But there was not a single moment when it was forgotten that I was in a competition and Hampton University was there to win. Putting all personal differences aside, we pulled together as a team and did what we had to do.

(C) To say the least, the teams' feelings during the competition were characterized as filled with excitement. We were all thrilled to be a part of such an experience. There were times of sheer nervousness but Dr. Haysbert kept our hearts at ease and our confidence high. As a team and as individuals we practiced hard and made sacrifices. Personally, the overall feeling was the desire to compete. It is not often, that one gets a chance to compete on a national level using his/her mental skills. I wanted a chance to do that and I am glad I did.

Experiences Following the Competition

Colleges and Universities are often competing in the sports arena but rarely does the spirit of competition enter the academic arena particularly in education. Thus, the teams victory was well received by the Hampton University family. Moreover, Carlton Brown, Dean for the School of Liberal Arts and Education continues to boast that the reaction he received nationwide was one of sheer admiration.

The University honored the faculty sponsor and team case competition winners with a reception and a certificate of award. Two or three newspapers in the state carried a feature article on achievements of the team. For example, it was noted in the Virginian Pilot that the prospective teachers who comprised the team would make a difference in the classroom as we approach the 21st century. Hampton alumnus from around the country telephoned to share in the excitement and offer their congratulations. Local public school personnel to include public school superintendent's echoed their enthusiasm with job offers to the team upon graduation.

As a result of her role, the faculty sponsor has conducted several workshops for public school educators on topics of related interest. She has also been asked to design an honor's course in education utilizing the case based teaching approach.

In sum, the team and their faculty sponsor have enjoyed some legitimate aspects of celebrity status following the competition. Adhim adds that the experience helped him in several ways, some too personal to share.

> ...I was, am and always will be honored to be chosen as a member of the team. The honor is heightened by the selection to serve as the team captain. Dr. Haysbert gave me love and guidance as if I was her very own child. My performance is sometimes average and my attitude can fly off the handle at the slightest

things but Dr. Haysbert saw and brought out qualities within me which others, including myself, had overlooked. After winning the competition, all sorts of doors opened. Contacts were made and wisdom was gained. I will continue to use case studies, perfect my skills through continuous learning and someday write case studies for others.

What Students Need To Know & Do to be Successful In This Kind of Event

An author not well known to the faculty sponsor once said, "success can be described as preparation meeting opportunity." For those that ascribe to this basic belief we stress preparation as a necessary ingredient which will lead to success in an event such as the team case competition. Students need to know:

- how to gather information on topics of interest that are often new to them
- their field of study (professional knowledge, legal and ethical issues)
- group dynamics
- the importance of team spirit
- professional protocol
- how to communicate among a diverse population
- the power of competition

Students must be able to do the following in order to be successful in events of this kind:

- clearly articulate a point of view
- demonstrate knowledge under pressure or stressful situation
- interact in a diverse environment
- think critically
- be broad minded
- disagree without being disagreeable
- exemplify confidence and self-esteem
- display poise, grace and professionalism at all times
- analyze a situation and take a position based on sound supportive evidence
- win and lose

In the eyes of the winner, Adhim offers this summary:

> Students need the desire to compete in order to be successful in an event such as the team case competition. Competition can bring out the best in a person, but you have to want to do it. Secondly, choose a diverse team. Team members should have different backgrounds and different, yet compatible, ways of thought. Third, know what is going on in the world. Be conscious of the things happening in our society. It is good to know the text book contents, but do not limit yourself to this

medium because by the time books roll off the printer, the information is already old. Fourth, and most importantly, be confident. If you are going to enter a competition, enter with the intent of coming home with nothing less than the gold!